

Abstract 672

TITLE: HIV Prevention/Sex Education Among Immigrant Latino Gay and Bisexual Men in New York City

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ISSUE: As one of the most impacted groups by HIV in the United States, immigrant Latino gay and bisexual men need culturally appropriate prevention programs.

PROJECT: New York City has 17% of the AIDS cases in the US, out of them, 30% are among Latinos. Proyecto P.A.P.I., (Poder, Apoyo, Prevencion e Identidad-"Power, Support, Prevention, and Identity ") is a volunteerbased, harm reduction and clientcentered program. Some strategies include; expanding HIV prevention to incorporate sex education; addressing issues of identity and acculturation; consciously exploring the overlapping of volunteer's and client's roles; incorporating volunteers in most of the development steps; and usingparallel processing techniques during volunteer trainings. This project provides individual and group experiences for clients and volunteers. Our services provide different degrees of involvement. These include: one session informational workshops, oneon-one counseling, threesession psycho-educational workshops, bi-weekly discussion groups, HIV testing, and earpoint acupuncture treatment. Volunteer opportunities include: weekly dropin volunteer meetings, social events, outreach and counseling activities, peer education trainings, supervision, educational materials development, and HIV testing triage.

RESULTS: At the end of the first year, over 900 group and individual interventions have been conducted. 626 Latino gay men have signed up to receive information on a regular basis. Volunteer participation in the program has steadily increased. 135 men enrolled in the program as volunteers; 53 of these have been trained and have worked as outreach workers; 15 of these participate in a leadership retreat; 4 of these are in the process of becoming peer counselors. Volunteer participation in program planning has also increased. HIV testing and Hep B vaccination has been particularly promoted among volunteers. Onefourth of volunteers (18) have tested for HIV while participating in the program.

LESSONS LEARNED: 1) Using socio-cultural norms about community, family and friendship gets clients and volunteers consciously involved in HIV preventions efforts for others and for themselves. 2) Cultural notions and values rega-ding counseling, therapy, volunteering need to be reviewed within the context of any prevention effort. 3) Integrating sexual identity and practices into discussions around religion, isolation, acculturation, gender, and cultural identity incases participation. 4) HIV prevention must address the cultural meanings of specific sexual practices and move from latex education to sex education. 5) Changing from "deficiency" models to one of self-regulation based on harm reduction guidelines providesindividuals with cognitive tools to develop reachable goals.

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